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High-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council
9–18 July 2018

Summary of the sixth biennial high-level meeting of the Development Cooperation Forum

Note by the Secretariat

In its resolution 67/290, the General Assembly decided on the format and organizational framework of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and required that the meetings of the high-level political forum take into account the work of the Development Cooperation Forum. In accordance with that resolution, the Secretariat hereby submits to the high-level political forum, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, a summary of the sixth biennial high-level meeting of the Development Cooperation Forum, as prepared by the President of the Council. The meeting was convened at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 21 and 22 May 2018 on the theme "The strategic role of development cooperation in achieving the 2030 Agenda: building sustainable and resilient societies". It produced key messages and concrete policy guidance for the consideration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up, as well as for policymakers and practitioners.

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I. Introduction

1. The Economic and Social Council convened the sixth biennial high-level meeting of the Development Cooperation Forum at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 21 and 22 May 2018. The meeting brought together over 300 high-level and senior representatives of Governments and stakeholders to review trends, progress and emerging issues in international development cooperation. Governments from all regions engaged in action-oriented discussions with renowned experts, civil society organizations, local governments, parliamentarians, philanthropic organizations, international organizations, development banks and the private sector.

2. The meeting had two objectives: (a) to assess progress in adapting development cooperation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development; and (b) to identify actions to ensure the effective contribution of development cooperation to building sustainable and resilient societies.

3. The meeting produced key messages and concrete policy guidance on the strategic role of development cooperation in achieving the 2030 Agenda for the consideration of the high-level political forum on sustainable development and the Economic and Social Council forum on financing for development follow-up, as well as for policymakers and practitioners. Research and discussions related to the Development Cooperation Forum will also inform the follow-up to the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system and the ongoing repositioning of the United Nations development system.

4. The meeting built on an extensive two-year preparatory process, involving analytical work, outreach and events, including a high-level symposium held in Argentina in 2017 and other special meetings, side events and workshops, as well as the Development Cooperation Forum survey exercise on the state of play with regard to the effectiveness of international development cooperation.

5. The report of the Secretary-General on trends and progress in international development cooperation (E/2018/55) set the table and tone for the discussions. Countries from all regions commended the report for addressing the most relevant issues in a notably balanced and constructive manner.

6. Participants emphasized the role that development cooperation can play in helping to reverse negative trends in inequality, conflict, climate change and the rise of violent extremism and populism. Notwithstanding the progress made and some positive trends, big issues on the development cooperation agenda remain to be tackled. One overarching message emerged from the Development Cooperation Forum with stark clarity: in order to meet the deadlines and expectations set out in the 2030 Agenda, development cooperation needed to change more radically and at a vastly accelerated pace.

7. Countries and stakeholders from all regions strongly reaffirmed the continued need for the distinctive space provided by the Development Cooperation Forum and identified areas for further work.

Key messages

(i) Development cooperation needs to change more radically and at a vastly accelerated pace to meet the deadlines and expectations set out in the 2030 Agenda. The situation demands both bold and inclusive leadership and timeliness of action on the part of policymakers and practitioners at all levels, drawing on the latest thinking, evidence and research from around the world.

(ii) Development cooperation must do more to truly focus policies and action first on those furthest behind. It must boost inclusiveness and put cross-cutting emphasis on gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and the inclusion of youth and other marginalized groups.

(iii) Recalling and reaffirming that the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national income for ODA is not enough to bring needed change for the poorest and most vulnerable countries and peoples, specific steps must be taken to: (a) ensure that commitments on official development assistance (ODA) are met; (b) bring more ODA to least developed countries and countries in special situations; and (c) strengthen the effective allocation and use of ODA. This should be done without further delay.

(iv) Development cooperation has to become more risk-informed, conflict-sensitive and resilience-smart, with stronger links to climate action. Silo and short-term approaches will fail.

(v) Development cooperation should bring innovation and more focused action to the means of participation, with a view to enabling people to engage meaningfully in development processes and other efforts to strengthen not only capacity but also confidence in public institutions.

(vi) Development cooperation should help to seize the opportunities that digitalization brings, including in mobilizing national resources and building national statistical capacity, bearing in mind the risks and without worsening the digital divide.

(vii) Priority should go to putting in place national development cooperation policies as part of public sector reform and alignment with the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Evidence shows that such policies can be powerful tools for getting better results from development cooperation and lifting the quality of partnerships over time.

(viii) Stakeholders in public-private partnerships should build on the principles of inclusiveness and transparency, as well as on existing capacities, plans and exchanges, while recognizing that the effectiveness and impact of such partnerships are context-specific. Analytical work and policy dialogue on blended finance that aligns with country priorities and brings about sustainable development must urgently be accelerated, without reversing gains in quality and effectiveness.

(ix) The second high-level United Nations conference on South-South cooperation, on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, should reaffirm the principles of South-South cooperation, reinforce its strategic focus and capture current dynamism and innovations to propel a concrete plan of action for all stakeholders. The Development Cooperation Forum should contribute to that effort in its role as a unique and trusted space for sharing knowledge and advancing the global policy dialogue on South-South and triangular cooperation.

(x) Support to build the capacity of Governments and other actors to monitor and review development cooperation must be greatly stepped up and tailored to country-specific contexts, with regular reviews informing the voluntary national reviews of progress towards the 2030 Agenda.

(xi) The Development Cooperation Forum should be strengthened as a platform for interregional and multi-stakeholder learning with regard to the monitoring, review and impact assessment of development cooperation, all of which are fundamental to the dynamics involved in achieving and scaling up sustainable development results with a view to having greater impact.

Summary of the discussion

8. *To meet the deadlines and expectations set out in the 2030 Agenda, development cooperation needs to change more radically and at a vastly accelerated pace.* Development cooperation can help to reverse negative trends in inequality, conflict, climate change and the rise of violent extremism and populism. These trends threaten hard-won development gains. They raise the stakes for bringing the broader public behind the 2030 Agenda and for generating support for its achievement. Although progress has been made in adjusting development cooperation to the era of the Sustainable Development Goals, it is still in flux. Big issues remain to be tackled. Actors are struggling to learn fast enough how to operate and achieve results in an increasingly complex and diverse development cooperation system. The situation demands both bold and inclusive leadership and timeliness of action by policymakers and practitioners at all levels.

9. The present discussion summary addresses six interconnected areas of action: (a) the strategic role of development cooperation in achieving the 2030 Agenda, building sustainable and resilient societies and leaving no one behind; (b) strengthening the effectiveness and sustainable development impact of multi-stakeholder partnerships and approaches, including blended finance; (c) getting better results through national development cooperation polices; (d) bridging capacity gaps and facilitating technology development and transfer in strategic areas; (e) leveraging South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development; and (f) strengthening the multilayered monitoring, review and assessment of development cooperation.

II. The strategic role of development cooperation in achieving the 2030 Agenda, building sustainable and resilient societies and leaving no one behind

10. *Development cooperation must do more to truly focus on putting first those who are furthest behind.* Much greater effort, experimentation, knowledge-sharing and mutual learning are needed in order to align institutions, policies and actions with this core commitment of the 2030 Agenda, with a transformative focus on results. Development cooperation should focus more systematically on countries and population groups with the least resources and weakest capacities. While the so-called fourth industrial revolution will bring important benefits, not all will benefit equally.

11. *Development cooperation must boost inclusiveness and put cross-cutting emphasis on gender equality, the empowerment of women and girls and the inclusion of youth and other marginalized groups.* It should support whole-of-government approaches that give new impetus to mainstreaming gender equality and youth

inclusion more effectively into all stages of policymaking, budgeting and service delivery.

12. *Development cooperation must become more risk-informed, conflict-sensitive and facilitate the development of resilience, with stronger links to climate action to build sustainable and resilient societies.* This means addressing the significant links between conflict, instability and poverty in policies and actions. And it means taking genuinely integrated approaches to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Greater and well-tailored support should be provided in particular to countries with limited capacities to move from managing disasters to managing and reducing risk and building resilience. Such support should build on existing national capacities and policy frameworks and put greater emphasis on strengthening the relevant institutions at the national and subnational levels. National Governments should take the lead in assessing capacity gaps and identifying the support needed from international actors.

13. *The speed, predictability and accessibility of climate financing, especially for least developed countries and small island developing States, should be further improved.* Climate change is putting increasing pressure on Governments to finance climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as reconstruction from disasters. The prevalent use of debt instruments in climate finance raises concerns, given the already rising level of indebtedness among developing countries. Efforts must also be strengthened to avoid double counting and to keep the $100 billion that has been committed to climate finance, as part of the Cancun agreements, distinct from other ODA commitments.

14. *Country categorization, per capita and average indicators should not be the primary approach to assessing financing needs and determining access to ODA.* Such indicators do not represent a sufficient measure of progress in the era of the Sustainable Development Goals, as they do not capture persistent inequalities and multidimensional poverty. The ongoing debate on graduation from least developed country status and support for middle-income countries has come to the forefront in this context, especially with the growing number of least developed countries meeting the graduation threshold on the basis of income.

15. *Development partners must make honouring ODA commitments and enhancing ODA effectiveness a priority in order to meet the deadlines and expectations set forth in the 2030 Agenda.* In 2017, only six countries met the United Nations target for ODA of 0.7 per cent of gross national income. The ratio of total ODA to gross national income for the members of the Development Assistance Committee declined from 0.32 per cent in 2016 to 0.31 per cent in 2017. Bilateral ODA to least developed countries remains far behind the commitment of 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of gross national income for ODA to the least developed countries. The rise of tied aid and the decline in country programmable aid (the part of aid in which developing countries have a particular say) threaten both progress made in aligning international support with country priorities and country ownership and leadership. The decline in the portion of ODA that goes to social spending also raises concern, especially where countries with limited capacities still rely on ODA for funding their social programmes.

16. *The high-level political forum on sustainable development must take specific steps to ensure that ODA commitments are met, bring more ODA to least developed countries and countries in special situations, and strengthen the effective allocation and use of ODA.* While limited with respect to the means of implementation overall, ODA remains critical, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable countries and as a catalyst for various other means of implementation. The Development Cooperation Forum was recognized and commended for its effective advocacy in bringing attention to the distinctive and vital role of ODA in achieving the 2030 Agenda.

17. *Development cooperation should help to bring innovative and focused action on the means of participation for people to engage meaningfully in development processes and other efforts to strengthen both the capacities of and confidence in public institutions.* Sustainable development solutions are increasingly emerging in a more collaborative and iterative manner on the ground. At the same time, different social movements across the globe show how individuals can unlock powerful dynamics for change, by bringing personal stories and facts together. Development cooperation for the 2030 Agenda should consider how to tap into those powerful currents, especially at the local level and among youth.

III. Strengthening the effectiveness and sustainable development impact of multi-stakeholder partnerships and approaches, including blended finance

18. *Multi-stakeholder partnerships and approaches should be embraced as a way to deliver better and more sustainable development results and take inclusiveness to a new level.* Civil society organizations, academia and the private sector have endless amounts of knowledge that could transform development cooperation into a much larger platform of change. Partnerships can help to mobilize different actors and means of implementation in complementary ways. They can help to develop inclusive, integrated and sustainable solutions to complex problems (e.g., those of a cross-sectoral, transboundary or transgenerational nature), in a collective and collaborative manner.

19. *Stakeholders in public-private partnerships should build on the principles of inclusiveness and transparency, as well as on existing national and local capacities, plans and exchanges, while recognizing that the effectiveness and impact of such partnerships are context-specific.* Partnerships should support the building of capacities and facilitate the sharing of technologies and ideas, not just financial resources. The expectations and objectives of the various stakeholders and beneficiaries need to be transparent and understood from the outset. Identifying the right partners — allies that share common objectives and are willing to advance the agenda together — is critical. There is no one framework that can cover all forms of partnerships. In some cases, guiding principles for stakeholder engagement can help to manage different objectives and expectations, including as they evolve over time. A soft infrastructure of dialogue, backed by an enabling political environment, should be nurtured to allow for the active and meaningful engagement of all stakeholders, especially marginalized groups.

20. *Engaging the private sector is indispensable to dramatically scale up not only the required financial investments but also the innovation, capacity-building and technology development and transfer needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.* The opportunity should not be missed to exploit the $22 billion in assets of the growing class of impact investors, who take into consideration positive social and environmental impacts alongside financial returns in their decision-making process.

21. *Where Governments rely on the private sector to deliver basic public services, they must fulfil their responsibility to ensure the accessibility, affordability and appropriateness of such services.* Especially in areas where public goods cannot be delivered profitably, public investment will remain essential.

22. *In countries with limited capacities, development cooperation should support Governments in building an enabling environment to maximize the non-financial development impact of blended financing projects.* Promoting public-private partnerships and investment agreements without solid legal and regulatory

frameworks and transparent fiscal accounting poses risks, especially for the populations involved.

23. *As the use of blended finance increases, development partners should take urgent steps to ensure that concessional funding is not diverted from least developed countries, other countries in special situations or from the social sector.* In 2017, only 2 per cent of total global foreign direct investment went to least developed countries. There is also a risk that the increased use of ODA for blended finance could worsen the decline in the share of country programmable aid and budget support, while increasing tied aid.

24. *Analytical work and policy dialogue on blended finance that aligns with country priorities and brings about sustainable development must be swiftly accelerated, without reversing gains in quality and effectiveness.* When public money is used to leverage private financing, parameters should be clearly established for issues such as technology transfer, employment and income generation, linkages to domestic production chains and the avoidance of monopolistic practices. Significant data gaps remain in terms of the sustainable development impact of blended finance, including the implications for women and marginalized and vulnerable groups. Better understanding is also needed of how to share the risks and benefits of blended finance in a fair manner, including the structuring of blended finance deals in a way that compensates the public provider of first-loss guarantees with a share of returns if an investment performs well.

25. *Development actors must ensure respect for country ownership and other principles of effective development cooperation where ODA is used to leverage private financing.* Developing countries have to be involved in the decisions regarding whether and how ODA is used for blended finance. The results framework used by the entity providing the private sector financing should be compatible with the systems set up by the developing country to record and manage the financing. Engaging Governments and holding high-quality public consultations with domestic stakeholders and beneficiaries during all stages of programmes and projects can help to ensure country ownership and leadership, alignment with country needs and priorities, transparency and accountability for results.

IV. Getting better results through national development cooperation polices

26. *Countries should use national development cooperation policies as powerful tools for ensuring broad-based country ownership and for lifting the quality of partnerships over time.* Such policies articulate a country's vision, priorities, commitments and activities for mobilizing development cooperation to support its national efforts. The Development Cooperation Forum survey shows that countries are adjusting the scope and use of their national development cooperation policies to improve alignment with country priorities. Such adjustments reflect changing domestic and global circumstances, including the 2030 Agenda and the diversification of the landscape of development cooperation beyond ODA. Some are also using national development cooperation policies to articulate the focus of their own development cooperation, priorities for the institutionalization of their South-South cooperation and related support needs.

27. *National development cooperation policies should be put in place as part of broader public sector reform and alignment with the 2030 Agenda and Addis Ababa Action Agenda.* When linked to national sustainable development strategies, such policies foster institutional strengthening, the use of country results frameworks, along with coherence in and coordination of policies and action. They can reduce

transaction costs and help to navigate asymmetries of power in development cooperation. To be more effective, national development cooperation policies should include the respective responsibilities of and specific targets for action by external partners, non-State actors and the national Government. They should also be broadly disseminated to the public and to national and local authorities.

28. *All relevant stakeholders and domestic beneficiaries should participate in the formulation, implementation and review of progress of national development cooperation policies, so as to ensure that no one is left behind.* Notwithstanding some improvement on this front, and engagement of external government and multilateral partners, there is a need to strengthen the extent and quality of engagement of civil society, the private sector and philanthropic organizations, as well as parliaments, in national development cooperation policy processes. As part of such policies, increased emphasis should be placed on equality and the inclusion of women, the poor and other marginalized groups.

29. *Periodic, multi-stakeholder reviews of progress in implementing national development cooperation policies should be conducted or reinforced to increase the quality and impact of partnerships.* These should inform the voluntary national reviews of progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda at the high-level political forum on sustainable development. The Development Cooperation Forum survey has identified specific needs for stepped-up capacity support to different actors in the monitoring and review of international development cooperation. That should be part of the broader strategy of the United Nations development system in strengthening its support to Governments at the country level in mobilizing the means of implementation for the 2030 Agenda.

V. Bridging capacity gaps and facilitating technology development and transfer in strategic areas

30. *Capacity support for domestic resource mobilization should be targeted to the countries furthest from nationally defined revenue levels with a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and more attention should be paid to the subnational level.* Support should focus on strengthening not only tax systems but also State capacities to create enabling policy environments for private investment and to deepen national and regional capital markets. In this context, least developed countries reiterated the call for an international investment support centre for least developed countries, under United Nations auspices, and stressed the need to optimize synergies among domestic resource mobilization, aid, trade, private capital inflows and debt relief.

31. *Development cooperation should respond to moves by countries towards more integrated approaches in their national budget and revenue strategies.* This includes making efforts to reduce the fragmentation of the standards and systems used by different development cooperation actors. The use of country systems, such as trust funds and other institutional platforms, can help to enhance the coherence and consistency of different projects and ensure sustainability and impact, through greater country ownership and leadership. Policy advice and capacity-building in relation to domestic resource mobilization must not focus exclusively on increasing domestic revenues but also take into account equity issues.

32. *Investment and capacity support must be stepped up to strengthen data and statistical capacity for the monitoring and review of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.* Achieving the 2030 Agenda and its commitment to leave no one behind require high-quality, accurate, timely, open and sufficiently disaggregated data at the global, regional, national and subnational levels, in addition to improved data

dissemination and use. Support for modernizing and strengthening national statistical systems should be guided by national strategic plans, aligned with the Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data. This includes strengthening the skills and technology of national statistical offices and authorities, with attention to the collection and integration of data from multiple sources, including the integration of geospatial information with statistics and other data, as well as to their capacities to engage in innovative, multi-stakeholder partnerships. Centres of excellence and other platforms for inter- or intraregional knowledge exchange can play a critical role in this regard.

33. *Domestic data generation should inform national sustainable development policies and development cooperation policies.* National statistical authorities need to be empowered to be at the centre of their statistics systems, and policymakers need to recognize the importance of data for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. To fully exploit new and traditional data, the statistical community must partner with technology companies, global data providers, researchers and academia, the private sector, philanthropic foundations and civil society. New data sources can provide an important perspective that complements traditional perspective, in terms of improving data availability, use and disaggregation. New business models and a governance system should be developed to guarantee the reliability and quality of the data.

34. *The second United Nations World Data Forum should be used a platform to boost investment and partnerships in national statistical capacity-building.* The United Nations Statistical Commission is also currently considering a new initiative to establish a financing framework for the implementation of the Cape Town Global Action Plan, with emphasis on improving the financing of data production in relation to the Sustainable Development Goals at highly disaggregated levels, including data related to children, youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants, among others.

35. *Development cooperation should help to ensure that new technology and access to digital data can bring transformative change with respect to financial inclusion and improve the provision of services to the poor.* Examples include mobile money platforms, access to real-time data relating to livelihood and health issues, and other data that brings a better understanding of peoples' needs, opportunities and constraints. Appropriate regulatory and consumer protection systems must be put in place, including codes of conduct for the protection of privacy, to ensure that the new data and technology opportunities work for and protect poor and marginalized people.

36. *Least developed countries should take full advantage of the activities of the Technology Bank for the Least Developed Countries to support their efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda.* The inauguration of the Technology Bank marks a significant step forward in development cooperation. Governments and other actors should provide robust and sustained technical and financial contributions to ensure a well-functioning Bank. While the Bank should go some way in bridging technology gaps in least developed countries, there is a persistent need to address asymmetries in innovative capacity, connectivity and access to technology, as well as capacity constraints and lack of adequate technology infrastructure in developing countries.

VI. Leveraging South-South and triangular cooperation for sustainable development

37. *South-South cooperation continues to expand and be characterized by diversification and resilience.* It is reducing asymmetries in access to development opportunities and responding directly to local demands. It is evolving rapidly,

reflecting not only the scope of development cooperation but the diversity of actors. Its principles, voluntary and partnership nature, crystallized 40 years ago in the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, remain pivotal to its contributions to sustainable development.

38. *Although the importance of South-South cooperation in adapting the 2030 Agenda and internationally agreed development goals to local circumstances is now more widely recognized, it should not be overstated.* Progress made in that regard does not substitute for North-South cooperation or for expedited progress in addressing systemic issues. South-South cooperation is increasingly being mainstreamed into national sustainable development strategies, including with support from some countries of the Development Assistance Committee and the United Nations system. Various models for formalizing South-South cooperation at the national level were shared at the Forum, from stand-alone development cooperation agencies to mechanisms for coordination among government entities.

39. *The visibility of South-South and triangular cooperation should be increased, and their added value and sustainable development impact further analysed, to help to achieve the 2030 Agenda.* Forum participants called upon countries and actors of the global South to be bolder in sharing their experiences and evidence regarding development cooperation, and for the global North to learn more from and integrate the experience and expertise of the global South into their practices. Such efforts should be supported at all levels, including through the Development Cooperation Forum, given its role as a unique and trusted platform for sharing experiences in South-South and triangular cooperation.

40. *The emphasis of South-South cooperation on non-financial cooperation and the broader partnership dimension should continue to influence the larger landscape of development cooperation and follow-up to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.* Building upon a plurality of approaches and diverse regional dynamics and perspectives, South-South and triangular cooperation go beyond financial cooperation. The focus on different means of implementation, including capacity-building, technology development and transfer, joint action for policy change and multi-stakeholder approaches, broadens the scale, scope and flexibility of contributions and facilitates a focus on longer-term impact. Industrial technology and financial services deserve greater attention moving forward in the work of the Development Cooperation Forum and in the preparations for the second high-level United Nations conference on South-South Cooperation.

41. *The conceptual framework for triangular cooperation needs to be updated to reflect these new realities and ways must be devised to address bottlenecks that impede its effective use.* Triangular cooperation initiatives integrate South-South principles into the project or programme design in tandem, with emphasis on mutual learning, the provision of knowledge, the sharing of experiences and capacity-building. Some use the term "trilateral" to better reflect the horizontal nature of these partnerships. Triangular or trilateral initiatives directly contribute to interregional collaboration and institutional strengthening in the South-South space.

42. *Multilateral development banks can and should play a greater role in this space, in particular in supporting knowledge-sharing and knowledge-management networks for sustainable development.* They can also support the further deployment of South-South and triangular cooperation as frameworks for scaling up best practices and fostering the development, transfer and adaptation of affordable science, technology and innovation solutions.

43. *Regional and national experiences in South-South and triangular cooperation should be further codified, systematized and mainstreamed into national development plans and national development cooperation policies.* Discussions revealed different

areas of specialization in different regions, such as institutions and regional integration in Africa, economic integration in the Asia-Pacific region, and social policy transfer and accountability frameworks for partnerships in Latin America and the Caribbean. There was consensus on the need for evaluation as a regular practice in South-South cooperation, although there was no support among developing countries for a shared evaluation methodology, which was seen as neither feasible nor desirable. Different regional approaches to systematization and institutionalization are emerging, including in tracking South-South cooperation, that could help to increase its scale and impact. The Ibero-American Programme for the Strengthening of South-South Cooperation was highlighted as one longstanding example of a collection of best practices that have helped to generate results-based evidence and served as a basis for the development of strategic, technical and methodological guidelines.

44. *The second high-level United Nations conference on South-South cooperation should reaffirm the principles of South-South cooperation, reinforce its strategic focus on promoting autonomy, resilience and structural change, and capture current dynamism and innovations, to propel a plan of action for all stakeholders.* The conference and its preparatory process should be used to advance broad-based, country-owned, inclusive and structured cooperation that is effectively aligned with the 2030 Agenda and other internationally agreed development goals. More exchanges are needed to address ways to leverage the comparative advantages of different stakeholders in South-South, triangular and trilateral cooperation, and to develop policy and legal frameworks applicable to them at the local, national, regional and global levels, including for blended finance and engagement with the private sector. Increasing the engagement of parliamentarians, local authorities, women, civil society, youth and other stakeholders will strengthen inclusiveness, transparency, accountability and a transformative focus on results.

VII. Strengthening the multilayered monitoring, review and assessment of development cooperation

45. *A one-size-fits-all approach to monitoring and evaluation is neither desirable nor practical, given the diversity among approaches and methodologies in development cooperation, along with the diversity among partners and constituencies.* Although the origins of and principles behind development cooperation may vary, the overarching objective with respect to the 2030 Agenda is the same and universally shared: achieving sustainable development results and leaving no one behind.

46. *Monitoring and review mechanisms need to continue to evolve to capture the complex and multilayered nature of development cooperation in the era of the Sustainable Development Goals.* Mutual accountability and transparency need to reflect the multiplicity of development actors and extend beyond the relationship between developing country Governments and international development cooperation partners to involve the full range of actors, stakeholders and beneficiaries.

47. *The use of integrated country-led development cooperation results frameworks and information systems needs to be promoted.* In recent years, progress has been made in strengthening the monitoring and review of development cooperation. Integrated country-led development cooperation results frameworks and information systems for use in evaluating and assessing the quality and impact of development cooperation are increasingly being put in place at the country level, and are complemented by a multitude of regional frameworks and platforms and reviews at

the global level. Further progress is needed, however, in reducing the use of parallel systems.

48. *Investment in high-quality data, monitoring and evaluation needs to be scaled up to move from tracking inputs to achieving development results.* Improving the quality of programme and project design and the establishment of baselines and indicators are essential to strengthening the effectiveness and sustainable development impact of development cooperation efforts. Challenges remain in the monitoring and review of progress with respect to non-financial cooperation.

49. *Capacity support to Governments and other actors for the monitoring and review of development cooperation must be greatly stepped up and tailored to country-specific contexts.* Efforts in this area would also benefit from increased interregional knowledge exchange and mutual learning. Practical steps need to be taken to strengthen the role of parliaments in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of development cooperation beyond the mere approval of budgets, including through equipping members of parliament with the institutional, financial and technical means to undertake oversight activities.

50. *Intraregional development cooperation mechanisms and frameworks should be promoted to support monitoring and review processes and to promote exchanges and mutual learning.* For example, member states of the African Union, with the support of the New Partnership for Africa's Development and the United Nations, are expanding their peer review mechanisms through joint activities and programmes to cover both the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063, in the context of the African Union-United Nations Framework for the Implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

51. *Partners in the global South should develop country-led systems to evaluate and assess the quality and impact of South-South and triangular cooperation programmes at various levels, and improve data collection, methodologies and statistics.* Although assessments of their own practices are taking shape, partners in the global South need to make further efforts to improve transparency and accountably. Developing countries should define their own parameters for measuring their South-South cooperation.

52. *The evidence base for engaging the private sector in development cooperation needs to be further strengthened.* Doing so should advance knowledge-sharing and mutual learning on how to strengthen public-private sector alignment with the sustainable development agenda. By engaging the private sector in co-designing, implementing and assessing the outcome of projects, the private sector can inject valuable expertise into the effort to build data-driven, transparent and results-focused monitoring and review frameworks.

53. *The Development Cooperation Forum should be strengthened as a platform for interregional and multi-stakeholder learning on the monitoring, review and impact assessment of development cooperation, all of which are fundamental to achieving and scaling up sustainable development results with a view to having greater impact.* Knowledge-sharing, mutual learning and transparency are invaluable to raising awareness, identifying emerging issues and facilitating cross-fertilization among the various monitoring and evaluation tools, approaches and communities of practice.

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Social and human rights questions: human rights

Letter dated 19 June 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement delivered by the representative of the Russian Federation during the Coordination and Management Meeting of the Economic and Social Council, under agenda item 19 (f) entitled "Social and human rights questions: human rights" (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Economic and Social Council under agenda item 19 (f).

(*Signed*) V. **Nebenzia**

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Annex to the letter dated 19 June 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement delivered by the representative of the Russian Federation, Mr. Stepan Kuzmenkov, during the Coordination and Management Meeting of the Economic and Social Council, under agenda item 19 (f)

"Human rights: report of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on its 2017 session"

(New York, 12–14 June 2018)

12 June 2018

Mr. President,

I should like to take this opportunity to comment on the concluding observations of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights following its consideration, at its sixty-second session in September 2017, of the sixth periodic report of the Russian Federation on the implementation of the provisions of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Despite the work carried out by the Committee to optimize its work, we believe that the arrangements and procedures in place for the consideration of national reports still require further adjustments. For example, during the dialogue itself, a significant amount of the time that might have been spent on a substantive discussion of the implementation of specific articles of the Covenant was spent on general theoretical questions.

There remains a concern over Committee experts being too trusting of information provided by non-governmental organizations, both via shadow reports and meetings held prior to the presentation of the report itself. At times such information is unverified and gives a distorted picture of events taking place on the ground. Unfortunately, it was on the basis of such unverified data that recommendations were made in paragraphs 15 (b), (c) and (e), paragraphs 47 and 49, and paragraphs 57 (b) and (d) of the concluding observations concerning the situation of indigenous peoples in the Russian Federation, in particular the Shor people and Roma, as well as representatives of sexual minorities.

Furthermore, the explanations provided by the delegation were not incorporated in the concluding observations in paragraph 6 (on the applicability of Covenant articles to the national judicial system and the training of public officials); paragraph 8 (on non-governmental organizations); paragraph 10 (on the rights of Crimean Tatars and ethnic Ukrainians); paragraph 31 (on the adoption of minimum wage legislation); paragraph 35 (on ensuring the right to strike); paragraph 37 (on providing a social security system); and paragraph 41 (on the situation of children living in institutions).

We cannot agree with the multiple references in the concluding observations to various general comments by the Committee, as contained in paragraphs 6, 13, 23, 25(e), 27, 29, 31, 33(e), 47(d), 51(g), 55 and 57 (e). At meetings of treaty body representatives, as well as meetings and conferences of States parties to international treaties, the Russian Federation has repeatedly stressed that general comments are solely the private opinions of experts and may not impose on States any new obligations additional to those undertaken by them when ratifying or acceding to an

international treaty, unless otherwise declared by a State on a voluntary basis. Accordingly, we officially declare that, in preparing periodic reports on the implementation of the provisions of the Covenant, we shall continue to be guided exclusively by the articles of that international treaty.

It is also inappropriate, in our view, for the concluding observations to include recommendations on contentious topics, in respect of which the international community has yet to develop a unified approach. This particularly applies to the concluding observations in paragraphs 23, 53 and 57 (b) regarding non-discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity and concerning the harassment of sex workers.

We wish to underscore that it is unacceptable to seek to impose topics on States that go against their State policies and undermine the bedrock of society. This particularly pertains to the use of opioid replacement therapy (paragraph 51 (d)) and the decriminalization of drug possession for personal consumption (paragraph 51(a)).

We also believe that the Committee's concluding observations should not include passages that were not discussed at the time the report was under consideration. This pertains to paragraph 15 (f) on the ratification of the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) of the International Labour Organization and paragraph 61 concerning the ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

In our view it is inappropriate to link article 11 of the Covenant to the issue of climate change (para 43), which, incidentally, was another topic that was not raised during the dialogue with the experts.

Accordingly, in its follow-up actions to implement the provisions of the Covenant, the Russian Federation reserves the right to be guided by its national interests in the context of implementing the Committee recommendations contained in a number of the aforementioned paragraphs of the concluding observations.

Thank you.